

EAST HAMPTON HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER WRITING ASSIGNMENT 2018-2019

REQUIRED GRADES 9-12

DUE FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2018

Writing a Personal Statement

What are personal statements?

Personal Statements are essays that you write for most college admissions and applications and scholarship applications. They may be short essays (200-500 words) or longer essays (650 words). Generally, essays should be typed, double spaced with a font no smaller than a 10. One page is usually equal to 250 words.

Why do I need one?

Most admissions applications and scholarship applications require a personal statement or answers to short essay or long essay questions. This is your best chance to tell readers about you. Use the personal statement for either college admissions or scholarship applications to highlight your personal experiences. Statements also give reviewers a chance to see your writing skills.

What does a personal statement look like?

The suggested format is two pages, double spaced, typed and follows this structure:

- Introduction
- Body
- Conclusion

When writing a personal statement, use standard formatting; it is more important to demonstrate that you can say what you need to say concisely than exhaustively.

How do I write one?

In your writing, make sure you are answering the question posed. You should support your main ideas with the best example or anecdote. Be sure to include only relevant details and use smooth transitions to tie your essay together. The process of writing a personal statement could be broken into steps:

- Step One: READ the application thoroughly and ANSWER the specific questions posed by each application. It is tempting to use the same statement for every application, but you may limit yourself this way. If a particular admissions application asks a question about something that you do not address, you will lose points!
- Step Two: Give yourself enough time to review and revise and especially to get someone else to review it for you. If you give an outside reader a very short window to read and give feedback you may not get the best results, or you may not get it back in time to use the feedback constructively.
- Step Three: Review the rough draft yourself. Give the draft to a peer and an adult (teacher, counselor, and parent) to review at the same time you are reviewing your draft even if it isn't your best work. Things to keep in mind when reviewing your draft:
 - Did I answer the question?
 - Spell check
 - Check the writing tips against your writing
- Step Four: Incorporate feedback from others; make corrections.
- Step Five: Read it once more, if you have time, have someone else read it once more.
- Step Six: Finalize the draft by incorporating the last revisions.
- Step Seven: Make photocopies as well as keeping an electronic copy if possible. The last thing you want to do is start all over if your hard drive crashes, you lose your disk or your application is lost in the mail.

What do I write about?

Some applications give very open ended questions. Here are some suggestions for organizing your thoughts into a coherent essay:

- What are your goals? Why did you choose these goals?
- Why did you choose to apply to this college/for this scholarship?
- What are your values and philosophy about education? Why?
- Is there one or two accomplishment(s), either in school or outside of school that you are particularly proud of? What have you learned from these experiences?

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- Do you have a time-management system? What is it?
- How do you schedule your time to include both academic and social activities?
- What difficulties or disadvantages have you faced in your life and how have you overcome them? What is one area in which you are weak and how have you or do you plan to overcome that weakness? (Keep this very brief.)
- Identify a leadership experience and talk about what the most important lessons of the position and experience.
- What makes you unique?

source: <http://www.hsf.net/innercontent.aspx?id=518>

Tips

- Speak from the heart. These personal statements are likely to be read by some administrator or adviser, not an academician or professor, so don't try to simply impress the reader with fancy verbiage or rhetoric.
- Get personal. Don't be afraid to tear at the heartstrings of your reader. Colleges nowadays are looking for people who both think and feel.
- Try to introduce new ideas in a comical way. A personal statement that makes people laugh is better than a personal statement that doesn't evoke any emotion.
- Check your work. Don't be happy with just the first draft, you should have learned better than that in high school. Find someone you feel comfortable and qualified letting revise your personal statement and give it to them.
- Colleges really do use and read these personal statements, so make sure to put some real effort into it.
- Consult with your college counselor and/or English teacher if you are having trouble

Warnings

- Make sure to use proper grammar. Nothing looks worse to an administrator than a potential student saying "Thank you for considering excepting me into your college."
- Be careful disclosing crimes you may have committed, you are not legally protected from self-incrimination through these personal statements. Also, I doubt any college would want to hear about "the time you knocked off a "Piggy Wiggly."
- Remember that if you are trying to be funny, that sarcasm doesn't read well so try to use outright humor.

source: <http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Personal-Statement-for-an-Undergraduate-Application>

Other Resources:

Christie Brown, Amanda and Katherine Schulten.” **Getting Personal: Writing College Essays for the Common Application.**” *New York Times*. 11 April 2013.

<https://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/04/11/getting-personal...>

8 Tips for Crafting Your Best College Essay

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get.../essays/8-tips-for-crafting-your-best-college-es>.

Purdue OWL: Writing the Personal Statement

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/642/01>

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In an essay of approximately 650 words choose one of the questions below and write a personal response. This essay will be due on Friday, September 7, 2018

NYS Common Core Writing and Literacy Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.A

Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.B

Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.C

Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.D

Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.E

Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.

Production and Distribution of Writing:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.5

Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grades 9-10 [here](#).)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.6

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

2018-2019 Common Application Essay Prompts

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.